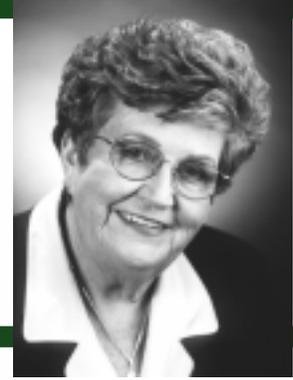




A REPORT TO THE 1ST DISTRICT



2003 SESSION WRAP

**REPRESENTATIVE
AL O'BRIEN**

**REPRESENTATIVE
JEANNE EDWARDS**

Dear Friends,

Now that the 2003 legislative session has ended, we wanted to let you know what we accomplished in Olympia and how it affects you.

Good government is balancing needs with reality. This year our "needs" far outnumbered the reality of our budget deficit, and significant cuts had to be made. However, we fought for a budget that was as fair as possible. Fortunately, we were able to make progress on a variety of issues, using funds in the smartest way possible. "Prioritization" was essential this year.

Here are a few of the positive outcomes of our recent legislative session:

- We protected critical social programs. Because of the work of House Democrats, no low-income child will be excluded from health insurance and mothers will still receive prenatal care. And in the end, the Legislature was able to agree on a budget that does not include any property, business or sales tax increases.
- We made significant strides towards solving our transportation gridlock problems with a new – but modest – statewide transportation package.
- We made prescription drugs cheaper for thousands, while saving the state money as well.
- We passed a package of bills that will help make the state even more competitive, while greatly improving upon our chances of winning construction of the Boeing 7E7.

These issues need your involvement. People often wonder why government matters without realizing how many police we have, how affordable and accessible education is, how long we sit in traffic each day, and how many jobs are out there depend entirely on what we want government to do – or not do.

We depend upon your being an informed citizen as we face these issues as a community. Never hesitate to contact us with a question or comment.

Please note that we are sending this joint newsletter to save money.

Sincerely,

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REPRESENTATIVES AL O'BRIEN & JEANNE EDWARDS

FIGHTING FOR THE BOEING 7E7



We were all reminded that Washington cannot take its relationship with Boeing for granted when Boeing decided to open up bidding for the construction of the proposed Boeing 7E7 to other states.

That is why business, government and labor leaders have been working hard to ensure that the 7E7 is built here in Washington. Our state is the home to some of the nation's best companies. However, we must continue to improve our economic competitiveness.

The bills that Boeing identified as critical to its ability to thrive in Washington deal with transportation, unemployment insurance reform, workers' compensation reform, taxes, shorelines, building codes and tuition-setting at state colleges and universities.

In this session, the Legislature addressed all of these issues, plus a tax-incentive package that would go into effect if Boeing builds the 7E7 here.

EDUCATION

Washington state schools have improved these last years and we owe our educators our gratitude. Unfortunately, the salaries our teachers receive reflect neither their value to our community nor the amount of work they put in. They deserve better.

However, because of our budget deficit, we were financially limited as to the amount of spending we could provide in the current budget.

TRANSPORTATION – THE KEY TO RETURNING OUR ECONOMY TO PROSPERITY

Early in the session the Legislature passed a package of accountability measures to ensure our transportation dollars are spent as efficiently as possible.

The transportation project plan that the House later passed included a nickel-a-gallon price increase that will provide the state with more than \$4.2 billion for highway projects and around \$650 million for other forms of transportation, like ferries. As a member of the House Transportation Committee, Rep. Edwards' support was critical to the bill's passage.

- **\$8 million dollars will go towards building a new access road to the UW-Bothell/Cascadia Community College campus**, a major condition necessary for the expansion of the two institutions.
- **The overwhelming bulk of the funds for the 1st Legislative District will go toward upgrades to SR 9.** The projects planned for this area will double the capacity of State Route 9 from State Route 522 to 228th St. SE and from 228th SE to 212th SE, including installing a middle lane for two-way left-turns. Sidewalks will also be built.



While modest, the final budget includes an overall 2% increase for K-12 spending. It partially funds I-732 by including a small salary increase for beginning teachers. And we were able to partially fund I-728 by allocating more than \$250 per student for class-size reduction projects, funding that was not included in the Senate's nor the Governor's budget.

We agree that both initiatives should have been fully funded. However, it is important to keep in mind that neither were repealed nor overturned by the Legislature. The goal of House Democrats is to fully fund both initiatives as soon as the state's economy rebounds sufficiently.

A REPORT TO THE 1ST DISTRICT

THE OPERATING BUDGET: BACK IN BLACK

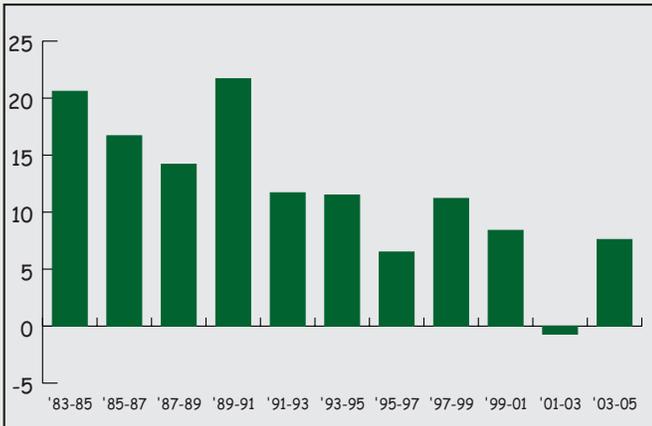
This session we had to remedy a \$2.7 billion deficit – no easy task even in good economic times. We were able to balance our budget without any kind of a general tax increase, which many of you felt was critical.

Though initial budgets from the Governor and the Senate relied on an all-cuts approach to balancing the budget, House Democrats insisted on protecting many of the social programs that those budgets left out. We were also able to improve the salaries of beginning teachers and slightly increase overall education spending.

We will keep working to ensure that we address our budget issues in a fiscally responsible way, but also in a way that honors our values as a community.

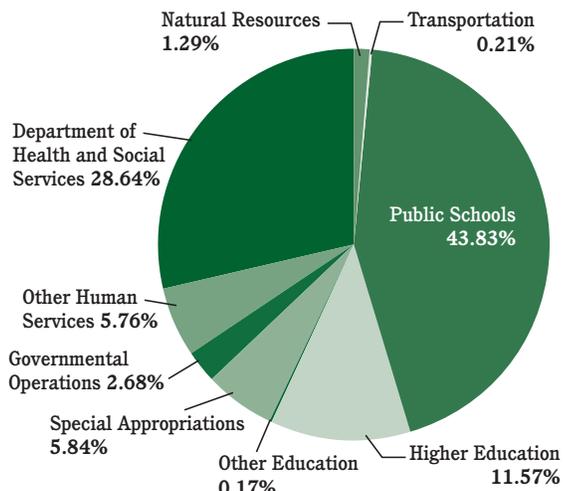
Here are a couple of graphs that help illustrate our budget situation:

REVENUE GROWTH



BIENNIUM

THE \$23 BILLION BUDGET BREAKDOWN



OUR COMMUNITIES

KEEPING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING SAFE

Rep. O'Brien, drawing upon his experience as a Seattle Police officer, sponsored legislation that requires sex offenders who work for institutions of higher learning to register that information with local law enforcement.

While our hope is that these people do not re-offend, and that their work plays a part in their staying on the right path, we have an obligation to keep students and the community at large safe. This bill will help law enforcement officials keep our campuses safe and is now law.

Rep. O'Brien also sponsored legislation preventing the siting of sex offender housing in areas where there are youth camps.

TUITION HELP FOR SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS

After times of crisis or catastrophe, we often forget about the future needs of family members left behind by fallen members of local fire and police departments.

Rep. O'Brien sponsored legislation that would provide tuition assistance for the spouses and children of those killed protecting their communities.

While this bill did not pass due to budget constraints, we'll try again next session.

MAKING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS CHEAPER

After years of debate, we were finally able to make prescription drugs more affordable. Using the expertise of doctors, pharmacists and others, the state will now create a list of the 'best' drugs in each category of illness, based on the combination of effectiveness and cost. This allows the state to consolidate their purchases, so that they can be done in bulk. The state as well as the patient will save money.

Though the program is limited to the disabled and people over 50 with low incomes, it's a significant step forward. We'll keep fighting to make this more accessible to others. Rep. Edwards has spent much of her career on health care issues, including the support of prescription drug reform.

A REPORT TO THE 1ST DISTRICT

THE CAPITAL BUDGET

The "capital budget" covers funds that are either given or loaned to local governments or nonprofit organizations for infrastructure, housing, and cultural and heritage facilities. It is separate from the transportation budget, as well as the "operating budget," which covers government spending on education, social service and public-safety programs.

The 1st District will receive funds for the following projects:

- \$159,900 for the Cascadia Community College Center for Arts, Technology, & Communications.
- \$295,075 for Tutmark Hill Community Park.
- \$300,000 for Cedar Grove Park Development, Phase 1.

OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR HELP

Local charities are having a very difficult time helping our community due to rising needs, rising costs of operations, and declining donations due to a struggling economy. Needs are at an all-time high and cuts in social services by the state have made the situation even more urgent. Needs range from food and clothing to school supplies for our children. Please contact my office at 360-786-7900 for information on who to contact for donations (organizations can also give us information to provide callers) or call the hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and leave a message for us and we'll call you back.

O'BRIEN RE - APPOINTED TO STATE BOARDS

Rep. O'Brien was recently re-appointed to the state's Organized Crime Advisory Board as well as the state's Correctional Industries Board and the Washington State Council on Aging.

- WHAT'S INSIDE:**
- Fighting for the Boeing 7E7
 - Transportation plan and local projects
 - Community safety
 - Prescription drug reform
 - State budget and local spending

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